

Facial Palsy (Birth Trauma)

Paediatric Management Advice Leaflet

What is Facial Palsy?

It is an injury to the facial nerve sustained during the delivery of a baby. This injury can be caused by forceps delivery, pressure from the mother's pelvis or any other type of compression to the facial nerve during the delivery process. In most cases the injury is mild and temporary and resolves in a few months. However, it can result in persistent facial paralysis in a small number of cases.

What are the symptoms?

- Asymmetric crying face—both sides of the mouth may not pull down during crying.
- The area below the eyes may appear uneven when crying.
- The eyelid may not close fully or blink on the affected side.
- There is little or no movement on the affected side.



Will my child need treatment?

Normally an observation approach is taken as in most cases it will improve within a few months without any treatment. Your child will be closely monitored by doctors. Physiotherapy for exercises can help. Surgery may be considered in severe cases of paralysis. (For more information <https://www.facialpalsy.org.uk/causesanddiagnoses/birth-trauma/>)

Complete the following exercises to help with your baby's facial palsy:

- **Facial Stimulation.** Slowly massage the affected side of your baby's face making small circular movements, starting up from the corner of their lips working your way up to the top of their face. Then start at the corner of their eye to the top of their face. Complete this using different textures e.g. tissues, soft make-up brush or towelling to help stimulate the muscles in their face.
- **Opening/closing of eye lid.** Assist your baby to either open or close their eyelid with your finger if the baby is unable to open or close their affected eye themselves.
- **Encourage smiling.** Encourage your baby to smile by stroking the corner of their lips and their cheek area.

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